

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Update on Kentucky's Writing Program: Code of Ethics, Professional Development Plan and Scoring Pilot (**Draft section for administration guide under separate cover**)

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 158.645, KRS 158.6453, KRS 158.6458, KRS 158.770, KRS 158.775,
703 KAR 5:010 and 703 KAR 5:080

History/Background:

Over the past year the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) has continued discussions on the design of 2007 assessment of writing, effective instructional practices that result in competent and accomplished writers, professional development for teachers and administrators on writing practices, improvement in the code of ethics to reduce inappropriate practices in the field and on specific issues related to the instructional time spent on portfolios. KBE finalized their decisions on the 2007 design for the writing assessment at their June 2005 KBE meeting. The next areas of focus are to improve the practices outlined in the Code of Ethics with the goal of reducing inappropriate practices and to design high quality professional development to improve the instruction of writing and the use of effective instructional practices.

The purpose of this update is to provide the KBE with background on the current policies defined in statutes, regulations and the Code of Ethics and to share preliminary recommendations from the Kentucky Writing Program work group, the initial planning design for professional development on writing and the results of the scoring pilot. This background information should provide the KBE with sufficient information to direct the work of the administration guide, professional development and scoring pilots.

Existing Policy. KRS 158.6453 sets forth the statutory requirements for the design and components of Kentucky's Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). Under this statute, the assessment program is to include an on-demand assessment of writing and writing portfolios consisting of samples of student work. This statute also required the KBE to develop regulations to address the reduction of teacher and student time in preparing portfolios. The statute specified that these strategies may include but are not limited to "limiting time spent on a single portfolio entry, limiting the number of revisions, or collecting entries at different grade levels." Based on this requirement the KBE established 703 KAR 5:010 (Attachment A), which establishes procedures to address reduction of student and teacher time in preparing the writing portfolio. The Code of Ethics (Attachment B) sets forth the code of conduct for development of writing portfolios.

KRS 158.770 established the Writing Advisory Committee (WAC). The functions of this committee include making recommendations to the KBE on methods of integrating writing into the curriculum, development of teacher training programs and design of professional development to facilitate the effective teaching of writing. One of the initial purposes was to make recommendations to the KBE on the “establishment of an intensive writing component in the state Program of Studies for grades seven (7) through (10). This committee has provided recommendations and advice over a period of time on the writing program and continues to meet and make recommendations to staff and the KBE. They will assist in the design of professional development on writing.

Administration Guidelines (Currently the Code of Ethics)

Currently, the *Writing Code of Ethics* is a separate document from the *Kentucky Commonwealth Accountability Testing System Administration Guide*. Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) staff is recommending that administration guidelines for the writing portfolio be included in the overall Administration Guide for the assessment system rather than continuing to have a separate code of ethics for writing. During discussions with the National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability (NTAPAA), members suggested better defining appropriate and inappropriate practices and consequences in the context of an administration guide.

On July 20-22, 2005, the Kentucky Writing Program Drafting Committee will meet to review and revise a draft chapter on writing instructional practices for the Kentucky Commonwealth Accountability Testing System Administration Guide. This committee will address the issues identified by the Writing Focus Committee, legislators, KBE members, school and district staff and parents. Members of the committee include twelve Kentucky educators representing all geographic regions of the state and all grade ranges. KDE staff will identify an outside facilitator for the committee. KDE writing staff will provide technical assistance during the three-day work session. As part of this work, KDE will determine if any regulations need to be amended and will bring this information forward to the KBE at a future meeting.

Since the committee will not meet until July 20-22, the draft of the section for the administration guide will be provided to KBE members under separate cover prior to the August 2005 meeting. It is the intent of KDE to inform the field of appropriate and inappropriate practices and any potential consequences at the beginning of the 2005-2006 year rather than waiting for the implementation of the 2007 assessment.

Professional Development

One of the ten areas the KBE directed KDE to study was the quality of the writing training and the audiences that are reached by the training. As stated previously, the Writing Advisory Committee has made recommendations in the past relative to professional development. A core team of educators from the Writing Advisory Committee, the Cluster Leader Network, and the Kentucky Writing Project Network will collaborate to design comprehensive professional development on writing that adheres to Kentucky’s high quality professional development standards and promotes the understanding of effective writing practices, the integration of relevant writing across the curriculum and school-wide writing programs. A variety of

professional development strategies will be included in the plan. One specific strategy being proposed is the Kentucky Writing and Learning Academy, which will be a partnership with higher education and the eight Writing Projects. The Kentucky Writing and Learning Academy (WLA) will complement the Kentucky Writing Program's existing professional development platform by serving the needs of new teachers and educators who need more training in foundational skills of standards-based writing instruction. While the Kentucky Writing Institute and Kentucky Writing Projects continue to focus on educational issues and special topics in literacy instruction, the WLA will continue to provide foundational support for educators. Attachment C, *Kentucky Writing and Learning Academy Concept Draft*, provides an overview of the preliminary ideas for the academy. Preliminary plans will be discussed with the KBE at the August meeting with a more detailed plan available for the October 2005 KBE meeting. Attachment D provides a draft overview of the writing professional development system.

Scoring Study

Based on input from NTAPAA and models from other states and in preparation for the 2007 assessment, the KDE writing staff designed an analytical tool for scoring writing portfolios. During the June Writing Advisory Committee meeting, the analytical scoring tool was reviewed and suggestions for revisions were shared by Writing Advisory members. On July 11-22, 2005, CTB-McGraw Hill, in collaboration with KDE writing staff, will pilot the new scoring method. This pilot was substituted for the summer writing portfolio audit. CTB supervisors will train the Kentucky Scoring Accuracy and Assurance Team (ScAAT) to score portfolios from the 2004 audit using the analytical scoring tool. These scores will be compared, scaled and applied to the holistic guide and compared for consistency and accuracy along with the new analytical guide analyses. The results of this study are not available to include in the staff note but will be presented at the August 2005 KBE meeting.

Policy Issue(s) and Options:

- What is the Kentucky Board of Education's advice to staff regarding the draft recommendations for the Administration Guidelines for writing instruction and for dissemination of the Guidelines?
- What is the Kentucky Board of Education's further advice to staff regarding the Kentucky Writing Program's preliminary professional development design?

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

Writing instruction and program implementation must improve in all schools if students are to become proficient writers. Proficiency in other content areas also involves the student's ability to present an understanding and application of content knowledge. Although open-response questions are not scored according to writing criteria, a student who has the ability to formulate a written argument or explanation has a greater opportunity to receive high scores in all content areas.

Groups Consulted and Brief Summary of Responses:

- Writing Advisory Committee – review and revision of the analytical scoring tool
- National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability – discussion of scoring study and analytical scoring tool; recommended generalizability study design
- Writing Focus Group – suggestions for professional development and revision to Code of Ethics
- National Writing Project – discussion of analytical scoring and assessment tools
- Connecticut Department of Education Writing Program – discussion of revision and editing multiple-choice items
- National Center for Education Statistics – discussion of writing prompts and text-based writing assessment
- CTB-McGraw Hill – provided models of analytical scoring tools; prepared for application of analytical scoring tool; discussion of scoring process; supervision of scoring study
- Office of Assessment and Accountability – technical assistance regarding generalizability study

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